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courage is contagious

Viewing cable 07BOGOTA2392, GOC PROTECTS LAND RIGHTS ACTIVIST

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07BOGOTA2392**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07BOGOTA2392	2007-04-11 17:47	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Bogota

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.elspectador.com/wikileaks>

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHBO #2392/01 1011747
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 111747Z APR 07
FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4003
INFO RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 7475
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 8873
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ APR LIMA 4940
RUEHZP/AMEMBASSY PANAMA 0172
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 5573
RUEHGL/AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL 3916
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHOND/DIRONDCP WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 002392

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

REF: A. BOGOTA 923

1B. BOGOTA 1013

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.

Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

11. (C) Cordoba department land activist Eloina Gaspar told us on March 25 she was being threatened by people who had identified her as the replacement for Popular Housing Organization founder Yolanda Izquierdo, murdered in late January (ref A). On April 1, the Prosecutor General's Office moved Gaspar out of Monteria to Cali with her 16-year-old son. Justice and Interior Minister Holguin told the Charge April 10 the GOC is protecting 30 high-profile victims' advocates, including ten from Cordoba (septel). End summary.

GOC Protecting Land Activist

12. (C) On our March 25-26 trip to Monteria, Cordoba department, land activist Eloina Gaspar told us her life was in danger and she wanted to leave Cordoba. She said the Police checked her house at least once a day to ensure her safety and the Prosecutor General's Office (Fiscalia) promised her to send her to another city (which they did on April 1, moving Gaspar and her 16-year-old son to XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX where XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX). Gaspar subsequently told us the Police in XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX checked on her welfare several times a day. She was already looking for a job. The Fiscalia promised they would also try to help her two older sons, who remained in Monteria, to move to XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX at a later date. Gaspar told us she was grateful for the help she had received from the GOC thus far and she was going to try to slowly disengage from the Popular Housing Organization.

13. (C) Gaspar replaced Popular Housing Organization founder Yolanda Izquierdo, who was murdered in late January. She told us she had tried to avoid becoming a target, but her close relationship with Izquierdo and her leadership within the group of plot owners or "parceros," prevented her from being a "spectator." XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX, told us two people with alleged paramilitary ties, Diego Sierra and Sor Teresa Gomez, were responsible for Izquierdo's murder in Monteria. He said Sor Teresa Gomez's associates had identified Gaspar as Izquierdo's replacement, and had made threats in an effort to persuade her to retract the claim that Gomez participated in the killing of Izquierdo.

GOC Improving Victim Protection Mechanisms

14. (C) The Fiscalia's Technical Investigative Corps Cordoba Director Cerly Otero said the Fiscalia's victims' protection program was good, but still needed work on implementation. Otero told us the GOC's failure to protect the life of people like Izquierdo reflected a lack of resources and experience. XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX told us on April 10 the Fiscalia's victims' protection program was cutting off victims from their personal support networks and rewarding the "bad people" by relocating them. He insisted the GOC's victims' protection program should be able to protect victims in their communities.

15. (C) Cordoba's Police Commander Col. Jaime Velasco warned that the lack of resources made the police unable to respond to the vast number of requests for protection. Velasco said he had divided the city into quadrants to patrol, helping to

ensure the safety of those under protection. Cordoba's Ombudswoman Julia Rodriguez said claims of threats had increased significantly in the last two years. Rodriguez regarded this a sign that people felt safe to make complaints, but said additional protection was needed. In late March, the GOC announced special measures to provide protection to advocates representing claims brought forth by the victims of paramilitary violence. Interior Minister Holguin told the Charge April 10 the GOC was protecting 30 high-profile individuals in this category, including 10 from Cordoba and 16 from San Onofre, Sucre department.

Background on Yolanda Izquierdo's Group

¶6. (C) Victim right's activist Yolanda Izquierdo was a leader of the Popular Housing Organization, a group that assists Internally Displaced Persons to reclaim land seized by paramilitary groups. Izquierdo, who was murdered on January 31 in Cordoba department, was one of several hundred to have received parcels on 10,000 hectares of land turned over by Fidel Castano in 1989 (ref B). Castano channeled the land through the Foundation for Peace in Cordoba (FUNPAZCOR) to gain favor with local families and to create a "buffer zone" against the FARC. XXXXXXXXXXXX told us in 1995-1996 Gomez and Sierra ordered the families off the land. He said the two have been exploiting the land ever since, even though Izquierdo and other displaced families retain title.

¶7. (C) With the start of the Justice and Peace Law process, Izquierdo and others saw an opportunity to reclaim their land and demand reparations. Gomez began to press the families to sell their titles to her at below-market rates. XXXXXXXXXXXX said Izquierdo had publicly opposed such a sale and had encouraged other families to do so as well, leading Gomez and Sierra to "silence her." The threats against Izquierdo's life began in December 2006, after she had encouraged about 800 families to fill out the Justice and Peace Law forms to enable them to obtain reparations as AUC victims. The GOC has arrested Izquierdo's assassin and has issued two arrest warrants for the intellectual authors of the murder, Diego Sierra and Sor Teresa Gomez.

Drucker

=====CABLE ENDS=====